



## INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE

### **MPH223 Social epidemiology: theories, methods and practical implications, 15 credits**

Socialepidemiologi: teori, metod och praktiska implikationer, 15 högskolepoäng  
*Second Cycle*

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#### **Confirmation**

This course syllabus was confirmed by Institute of Medicine on 2019-11-08 and was last revised on 2023-10-11 to be valid from 2023-10-11, spring semester of 2024.

*Field of education:* Medicine 100%

*Department:* Institute of Medicine

#### **Position in the educational system**

The course is a compulsory course within the Master's Programme of Public Health Science. The course can also be offered as a freestanding course on advanced level.

The course can be part of the following programme: 1) Master's Programme in Public Health Science (M2PHP)

#### *Main field of studies*

Public Health Sciences

#### *Specialization*

A1F, Second cycle, has second-cycle course/s as entry requirements

#### **Entry requirements**

Qualification for admission to the course requires professional degree/Bachelor's degree of at least 180 credits in a health science, social science, science, economics, arts or engineering field of education and grade Passed/E in English B/English 6.

#### **Learning outcomes**

On successful completion of the course the student will be able to:

*Knowledge and understanding*

- Explain the scope, developments and application of social epidemiology
- Classify the quantitative methods used to measure and dissect social inequality and inequity in health as well as their applications in social epidemiology
- Describe how the reciprocal relationship between macro- and micro level factors, influence social and political processes that contribute to inequalities in health
- Describe and identify scientific and ethical strengths and limitations of using social epidemiology as a foundation for policy change and/or interventions

*Competence and skills*

- Appraise and apply concepts, models and theories of social epidemiology in exploring the social drivers of inequality and inequity in health
- Apply and test quantitative methods to measure and investigate the distribution of health and diseases and their social determinants
- Propose the practical implications of social epidemiological research and its use for intervention and programme design

*Judgement and approach*

- Problematize how social factors are theorized and operationalized within social epidemiological studies
- Argue the strengths and weaknesses of different quantitative methods in social epidemiological research
- Critically reflect on the relevance of theory for the design of intervention and programme to address health inequality and inequity in health

The course is sustainability-focused, which means that at least one of the learning outcomes clearly shows that the course content meets at least one of the University of Gothenburg's confirmed sustainability criteria. The content also constitutes the course's main focus.

**Course content**

Social epidemiology is a branch of epidemiology particularly investigating how social factors and processes contribute to unequal distribution of health and ill health. The course will discuss relevant social epidemiological theories and conceptual models that can be used to explain social inequality and inequity in health and their social drivers in the population. The course covers quantitative methods used to measure and investigate social inequalities and inequities in health, both methods originated within the field of epidemiology and social sciences. Finally, the course also focuses on the knowledge on design, implementation and evaluation of intervention programme to address the social inequality and inequity in health. In summary, this course provides knowledge and practical tools to understand, describe, analysis, interpret and discuss the social

inequality and inequity in population health, as well as their practical implications for intervention and programme design to address the gaps of social inequality and inequity in health. Knowledge originated from social epidemiology research can be used as a base for formulating recommendations to key stakeholders, decision and policy makers.

### **Form of teaching**

Lectures, seminars, hands-on data analysis exercises in computer labs, individual and group work, and home assignments.

*Language of instruction:* English

### **Assessment**

The course will be examined through,

- Two mandatory seminars (One mandatory seminar with critical review of social epidemiological studies; One mandatory seminar with peer review of project plan for individual written assignment)
- an individual written exam
- an individual written assignment

Incomplete or absence from any of the mandatory tasks will be compensated for by additional tasks according to instructions from the course coordinator. A student who has taken two exams in a course or part of a course without obtaining a pass grade is entitled to the nomination of another examiner. The student needs to contact the department for a new examiner, preferably in writing, and this should be approved by the department unless there are special reasons to the contrary (Chapter 6 Section 22 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

If a student has received a recommendation from the University of Gothenburg for special educational support, where it is compatible with the learning outcomes of the course and provided that no unreasonable resources are required, the examiner may decide to allow the student to sit an adjusted exam or alternative form of assessment.

In the event that a course has ceased or undergone major changes, students are to be guaranteed at least three examination sessions (including the ordinary examination session) over a period of at least one year, but no more than two years, after the course has ceased/been changed. The same applies to placements and professional placements (VFU), although this is restricted to just one additional examination session.

### **Grades**

The grading scale comprises: Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass (G) and Fail (U).

In order to Pass (G) the course, a student has to earn a Pass (G) on both individual

written exam and individual written assignment. To Pass with distinction (VG) a student has to earn Pass with distinction (VG) on an individual written exam and Pass (G) on an individual written assignment.

### **Course evaluation**

The course evaluation is carried out in writing and orally with the students. The course leader is responsible for analysing the evaluations and giving propositions for development. The analysis and propositions of development is shared with the students through the program council.

The results of and possible changes to the course will be shared with students who participated in the evaluation and students who are starting the course.